

# Making your home safe

During a hurricane, homes may be damaged or destroyed by high winds and high waves. Debris can break windows and doors, allowing high winds inside the home. The force of the wind alone can cause weak places in your home to fail.

After Hurricane Andrew in 1992, a team of experts examined homes that had failed and ones that had survived. They found four areas that should be checked for weakness: the roof, windows, doors and, if you have one, garage door.

**Garage door bracing**  
Bracing, Center support, End support  
Interior view

**Hurricane straps**  
Designed to help hold the roof to the walls; inspect attic for hurricane straps of galvanized metal. You may need to call a professional to retrofit your home with hurricane straps.

**Trees and shrubs**  
Trim trees and shrubs frequently. Remove any loose foliage from center of trees to allow wind to blow through them, making it less likely they will pick up wind. Remove any loose branches that could catch wind and crash into the home.

**Landscaping**  
Replace gravel and rock with mulch or pine needles.

**Loose items**  
Move outdoor furniture, garbage cans, debris and loose items inside and encourage neighbors to do likewise.

**Interior view**  
Active door, Inactive door  
Bolts need to be strong enough to resist hurricane winds.

**Holes at 12 inch intervals**  
5/8 in. thick plywood  
Drill four holes in center of plywood to relieve air pressure during hurricane

- Measure each window in your home horizontally and vertically, adding additional 8 inches both ways for overlap.
- Drill holes in the plywood the same diameter as the bolts or screws you will be using, two inches from edge.
- Hold the plywood up to the window and, placing washers over the holes, use the lag screws or expansion bolts to secure the plywood to your house.